

## Changing your culture

It's important to create a culture of flexible working in your organisation to maximise the benefits it can bring.

Successfully embedding flexible working into your organisation's culture can help:

- reduce any stigma related to working flexibly
- encourage employees to request flexible working
- support managers to understand the processes and policies and support employees
- maximise the benefits of flexible working for your organisation
- prevent issues and handle any challenges
- achieve your business objectives
- support your organisational values

## Making changes

Changing your culture might mean making changes in your organisation. Any changes should be communicated clearly to everyone. Depending on the change, you might need to consult with staff to agree changes, including trade union or employee representatives.

When making a change, it's important to get support from senior leaders and managers. If they understand the benefits and support a change, they can help implement it and lead by example.

To create a culture of flexible working, it can help to:

- design jobs with flexible working options in mind
- include any flexible working options in job adverts
- raise awareness – for example by sharing success stories or role modelling flexible working
- design performance measures based on output and achievements rather than hours worked
- have a flexible working policy – [read more about having a policy](#)
- share and promote your flexible working policy, if you have one
- train managers on how to handle flexible working requests
- set clear expectations and boundaries – for example, how to keep in touch, defining work hours

Flexible working arrangements might mean some employees work at different times or locations. This might mean reviewing how your organisation or teams work. For example, the way teams communicate and the channels they use.

## Dealing with challenges

There can be challenges implementing flexible working. For example:

- you might not be able to accept every request
- flexible working arrangements could change the way staff communicate and work together
- you might have set-up costs for things like equipment, training or recruitment

You can prevent issues and deal with challenges by taking steps to create a culture of flexible working.

For example:

- having a clear policy can help you handle requests consistently, keep good working relationships and help agree alternative options when you cannot accept a request
- putting formal communication channels in place and setting clear expectations can help avoid communication issues when working flexibly
- embedding flexible working well can bring long-term savings that make up for set-up costs – including increased productivity, increased staff retention, reduced cost of office space, reduced sickness absence

## Evaluating flexible working

As an employer, you should consider how you'll monitor and review flexible working in your organisation.

This can help you understand:

- how much flexible working is being used in your organisation, and if that changes
- if flexible working has improved or affected other things in your organisation
- if a specific change has been successful
- any issues and opportunities for improvements

It's a good idea to gather data before making a change, so you can compare data before and after a change.

### Types of data to look at

It's good practice to record data about how your organisation uses flexible working. For example:

- number of requests
- how many requests are accepted, partially accepted and refused
- the reasons for any refusals

Other organisational data can also help review how a change has affected the organisation.

For example, data you routinely collect relating to:

- sickness absence
- staff turnover, including anecdotal evidence from exit interviews
- recruitment
- diversity of staff and job applicants
- gender pay gap
- organisational performance
- employee performance
- employee satisfaction, including staff surveys

Which data you review will depend on what you need to measure and evaluate.

For more advice about measuring and evaluating flexible working:

- [read CIPD's flexible working guidance](#)
- [use CIPD's checklist for measuring and evaluating flexible working](#)

## Get more advice and support

As an employer, you can get more advice about implementing flexible working by reading:

- [CIPD's flexible working guidance](#)
- [flexible working case studies from Working Families](#)

You can also get advice on making a business case:

- [Working Families's advice on making a business case for flexible working](#)
- [CIPD's advice on flexible working business cases](#) including a checklist template

Employers who want to promote flexible working in job ads can use the [Happy to Talk Flexible Working logo from Working Families](#).

## Acas training and support

Acas offers training for managers and employers:

- [flexible working training courses](#)
- [webinars](#)

Acas also offers [tailored support for employers](#) to address specific challenges in your organisation.